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*What Indians Mean to do When they Sing, and how Far they Succeed.*

JOHN COMFORT FILLMORE. Journ. Amer. Folk-Lore, Vol. VIII (1895), pp. 138-142.

Prof. Fillmore's thesis is as follows: "I am profoundly convinced that the unity of all music, primitive and civilized, will become the most striking fact which will force itself on the attention of the observer; that it will certainly be found that the Indian always intends to sing precisely the same harmonic intervals which are the staple of our own music, and that all aberrations from harmonic pitch are mere accidents, due for the most part to imperfect training, or rather to the total lack of it." The details of the demonstration of this theory, which seems supported by the experience and experiments of Prof. Fillmore, Miss Alice Fletcher, and Dr. Boas, are given in author's interesting pages.

#### IV. PSYCHIC RESEARCH.

*Apparitions, Thought-Transference and an Examination of the Evidence for Telepathy.* By G. FRANK PODMORE, M. A. London, 1895, pp. 401.

*Ueber Trugwahrnehmung.* Von EDMUND PARISH. München, 1894, pp. 236.

*Ueber den Wahn.* Von DR. M. FRIEDMANN. Wiesbaden, 1894, pp. 196.

*Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research*, ending with and including part XXVIII. July, 1895.

*Sphinx.* Bd. XXI, 1895. Braunschweig.

*The Psychical Review*, quarterly, since 1893. Grafton, Mass.

*Rivista di Studi Psichici.* Anno I, 1895. Milano, Padova.

An American psychologist concludes a series of reviews of recent border-line literature in the January number of the *Psychological Review* with these words: "The telepathic theory, and whatever other occult theories may offer themselves, have fairly conquered the right to a patient and respectful hearing before the scientific bar; and no one with any real conception of what the word 'science' means can fail to realize the profound issues which such a fact as this may involve." He also thinks that "the Sidgwick report affords a *most formidable presumption* that veridical hallucinations are due to something more than chance." A few pages before he speaks of telepathy as a name given "in lieu of a theory about it," which looks as if the issues were not so profound after all. Mr. Podmore, in his "Apparitions and Thought Transference," says "the treatment of telepathy by those responsible for the word involves just as little theory as Newton's conception of gravity." His state of mind seems summarized in the sentence, "There is hardly any longer room for doubt that we have something here which no physical process at present known can adequately account for." This transference, "without word, gesture or conscious thought," and also by channels other than those of the senses, may be in the normal or may be in the hypnotic state. It may appear in the percipient as a vague distress, a blind impulse to act, sleep, hysteria, local anæsthesia, mental imagery of various kinds, ideas, neuroses, and may be the action of mind on mind, or perhaps of brain on brain, etc. "There are indeed indications that contact facilitates the transference." "It is, of course, to be anticipated that the difficulty of affecting telepathic connection would increase very rapidly with the distance." Mr. Podmore also candidly adds that "in our experiments an increased interval between

agent and percipient, especially if a wall or floor is made to intervene, has affected the results prejudicially." "In the experiments conducted in the same room or house, and in most of the spontaneous cases at close quarters, the idea transferred corresponds to a mental image consciously present in the mind of the agent." On the other hand, "in most cases of thought transference at a distance, the idea transferred is not one consciously present in the agent's mind at all—the idea of his own personality." The telepathic junction between two minds may be effected "through the absolute," as Malebranche thought pre-established harmony was, or by means of radiant "neuricity." Mr. Podmore concludes that he is "entitled to suggest that some kind of vibrations, propagated somehow through a conjectural medium, from an unspecified nerve-centre, may possibly explain the transference of thought." That something from something through something, somehow may possibly account for it, is certainly modest, but to our own thinking, does not suggest a very high standard of what scientific explanation really is.

Although "the absence of mundane analogies and the difficulties attending any such explanation yet suggested, forbid us to assume that the facts are capable of expression in physical terms," yet it may be that we have here "traces of the primeval unspecialized sensitiveness which preceded the development of a nervous system—a heritage shared with the amœba and the sea anemone." "There are surely phenomena here which seem to point to super-normal faculties, such as clairvoyance, retro-cognition and prevision, themselves hardly susceptible of physical explanation." In view of all this, it is not surprising that "the future place of telepathy in the history of the race concerns us even more nearly than the mode of its operation," and he proceeds to inquire whether this marvelous new-found "faculty, as we know it, is but the germ of a more splendid capacity, or the last vestige of a power grown stunted through disuse." His conclusion is that while very likely telepathy will amount to a good deal in the far future, it probably played a great rôle in the past, and "is, perchance, the relic of a once serviceable faculty which eked out the primitive faculty of gesture, and helped to bind our ancestors of the tree or the cave in as yet inarticulate community." While "the first stage of our inquiry is not yet complete," and it would be "futile to declare" concerning the new agency, still "if there are sufficient grounds for believing in faculties which give to man knowledge not derivable from living minds, of the distant, the far past and the future, it would be more reasonable to regard telepathy as a member of the group of such super-normal faculties, operating in ways wholly apart from the familiar sense activities, and not amenable, like these, to terrestrial laws."

On the other hand there are things that the psychic researchers have the virtue to doubt. In his article on "Resolute Credulity," Mr. Myers sets forth seven theses with eleven sub-heads, as not yet having received evidence enough to give them even a *prima facie* claim to be regarded as true. These, roughly put, are eastern magic, the Blavatsky performances, influence of the stars, palmistry, the miraculous effect of the water at Lourdes, certain claims of Christian science, save so far as suggestion may account for them, and the production of supernatural or telepathic phenomena, such as are pretended to by some showmen. Mr. Myers explains that there are now two groups of psychologists: first, the accurate experimenters, who work on the senses, fatigue, reaction times, attention, memory, mental imagery, the nervous system in general,

and a host of cognate inquiries. But "the drawback is that such methods and such apparatus are better adapted to give accuracy to facts already roughly known than to carry the inquiries much farther into the depths of our being. It is work preparatory to discovery rather than discovery itself." "At the other end of the range, a group still small, though it spreads yearly, somewhat wider in each civilized land, is attacking psychological problems of the highest importance, but which admit as yet of only approximate and tentative methods of inquiry. This is work of discovery indeed; but it is rough pioneer's work — preparatory also in its own way to the ultimate science to which we all aspire." "If you choose the former task as your own, you can progress without mistakes; if the second, you needs must make many mistakes, since no man who dares not be often baffled can reach the secret of the snows."

To "colligate" the views falteringly shadowed forth above, the agent may, perhaps, act on the percipient by means of a purposive idea if he is near, or a more unconscious "personality suggestion" if far, by an impulse which may be somehow associated with a physical agent, like neuricity or vibrations, or may act independently of these through some medium, or directly mind on mind, or brain on brain, or indirectly through the absolute. The percipient receives the impression either as a mental image, an impulse to act, a vague unrest, or a neurosis. The super-normal faculty in this action played, mayhap, a great rôle in the past, before speech, in binding primitive man into social communities, or, perchance, it is a rudimentary organ of a primitive diffused sensitiveness, which preceded the special senses and even the nervous system. On the other hand, possibly, it is a just nascent faculty whose golden age is yet to come. At all events, in the present time, it is either a vesige or a bud, and we must throughout beware of "mundane analogies," and remember that it is, perhaps, "not amenable to terrestrial laws," nor susceptible of "physical expression."

It would seem that the "time had now come for American psychologists to ask themselves squarely, not in the spirit of "scoffers," but as most urgently needing for legitimate use in research every tentative theory that is scientifically legitimated, whether the above general conclusions of this matter, that "the telepathic theory and whatever other occult theories may offer themselves have fairly conquered the right to a patient and respectful hearing before the scientific bar," and whether there is now "a most formidable presumption" in this field, are right; or whether, on the other hand, as we are profoundly convinced, the entire telepathic presumption is yet very far from being a *prima facie* case, is premature at best, and that it is at present with its rank mazes of mystic guess-work a source of befuddlement and obfuscation galore. To say that telepathy "is a name given in lieu of a theory about it," or, with Mr. Podmore, to say it "involves just as little theory as Newton's conception of gravity," seems to us almost grossly misleading, to say the least. Telepathy began as a definition of a new mode of psychic interconnection, and, instead of resting on the commonest facts of sense, and proving by mathematics, it has yet to find a single fact that can be demonstrated regularly in laboratory courses that proves or even illustrates it with certainty.

First of all, it is the vice of the researchers that they have vicious methods of treating the great body of non-experimental material. The value of the spontaneous cases is exceedingly great, not because they bear on telepathy, but as human documents. Indeed, some of them probably would never have been recorded had not the

society raised the question whether hallucinations were not sometimes veridical. The writer is at present working over 1,700 returns to a *questionnaire*, in which there are, perhaps, two score accounts of dreams of flying, hovering, or floating. These, a dream interpreter might say, strengthened the case for levitation, or, perchance, suggested a vestigial heritage of the time when man's far-off progenitors were aquatic, or would soar through space in the future, or that the soul left the body, and did hover, etc. If our dream philosopher were logically disposed, he would, perhaps, tell us that if we diligently collected cases, we might even reach a degree of probability for something residual about such dreams, as great as Mr. Gurney said existed for thought transference, viz.: "the ninth power of a trillion to one." Now, every logician and every mathematician knows that we have no good theory of absolute chance, and that there is a sense in which the probabilities against any given act or event are infinite, and that the sworn testimony of the four best men in the world, that they really saw the four straight suits of well-shuffled cards dealt one to each man, on an outgoing train from Boston a few years ago, could never begin to offset the vast probabilities against such an event. But our point is that the interpreter's method in treating dreams is not the scientific one, or at least can become so only after a vast collection has been made of all kinds of dreams, and by a method which does not appeal at the outset to the wide popular prejudices that there is something true about dreams. We want thousands of dreams recorded at once by the Nelson or some better method, with all possible detail and circumstances, and then we will study their veridical along with other implications, which is a very different method, and will lead to very different, results than if we had collected dreams of flying or floating to study their bearings on some revolutionary theory of levitation. The dream interpreter might, perhaps, claim great credit as being the first to study dreams, but it is only as the old *natur-philosophie* which held instinct to be divine and prophetic, might claim to have first studied it, when all their work was really only in the anecdote stage. The difference between the methods of the researchers and those of men like Friedmann, or to go farther back, Kandinsky, is immense. The latter wish to know all about the cause, frequency, mental and cerebral conditions and details of all kinds of hallucinations. The former loaded the dice at the start in favor of those that bear on a simply stated but stupendous theory and tremendously reinforced by all the old prejudices that make men lynx-eyed for every faint trace of evidence for the independent existence of the soul apart from the body, and bat-eyed for all against it. It is the difference between Kant and true idealism and Swedenborg and pneumatology. The dreams of a metaphysician are surely not likely to give the true explanation of the dreams of visionaries.

The value of the so-called experimental investigations of the researchers we regard as of far less value than the record of spontaneous cases. The latter will remain a valuable collection of data; the former will, we think, ere long all be looked upon by psychologists as the elaborate tests with the Creery girls have been since their confessions. The writer has visited seers and seances for years and has devised many tests, especially three, which, had they been successful, would very likely have compelled belief in his mind. These involve the strongest possible reproduction in the mind of a past fact of feeling, will and intellection, each one of greatest strength and importance in his case and each also written large on one page, but sealed, the seer to have the package and the writer, at the same

time to intently think its contents. This would, of course, succeed with many subjects, but with the writer it is uniformly declined, or totally failed of. Till there is at least some single case in which with effective apparatus and fixed conditions, telepathy, genuine in quality, but ever so faint in quantity, can be demonstrated as surely as argon can be made, or oxygen frozen, or, at least, as the powers of a lightning calculator, or the hypnotic exaltation of a sense, it must rank with the Keely motor, those who assist at the demonstration of which leave in a deeper limbo of uncertainty than when they went, while only a diminishing few find a *prima facie* case strong enough to prompt the investment of money, unless, indeed, they are already so deeply committed to it that they desperately add more and more in the forlorn hope of saving former investments — a case which we are persuaded has its analogue with some of the researchers. A member of the society who prints communications in the English proceedings, and a person of liberal education, called on the writer a few years since to be shown a special form of the slate-writing trick. This was first done with due talk of spirits, raps, etc., then it was explained and demonstrated. The visitor finally sat back in his chair and said in substance that he must believe that I did it by the aid of spirits rather than as I had explained, for it seemed so much more simple and natural. I could not convince him that I was not a medium, and very probably he thought a most disreputable one, denying the real agency that did my work for the sake of pretending to be scientific. The writer has diligently read the experiments of the proceedings, and can honestly say that there is not one in which the conditions as reported seem to him satisfactory. A physicist may erect effective precautions against one whole group of possible sources of deception; the neurologist against another; the psychologist against another, and so on through a long list; but there will yet remain a vast residual possibility of new codes, conscious and even unconscious, of devices that seem most impressive till known, and then disgustingly simple and even vulgar. The most honest men in the world are often least aware, and that from the very honesty of their nature, of the infinite intricacy of their automatic natures and the tricks it can play. Give us one little fact, ever so little, that we can freely test and reproduce one a year in our laboratory. We will cross seas to see it, will acknowledge our mistaken skepticism, and confess telepathy, and turn the research of one laboratory at least in a new direction.

The following are some of the conclusions reached in recent numbers of the "Proceedings": Applying the new psychological methods to the discussions of the voices heard by Jeanne d'Arc, Mr. Andrew Lang concludes that some persons "entirely sane may be so constituted as to see and hear, as if externally, their ideas and mental impressions," and is also "compelled to believe in some abnormal extension of faculty, corresponding to her nature and unparalleled genius. To a certain extent she was admitted within the arena and sanctuary of the universe." Dr. Ermcova, as a result of experiments with a woman with remarkable automatic powers, especially shown in writing in the waking state, which are described in about seventy pages, sums it all up by thinking that the beginning of an explanation of telepathy, based solely on experience, may be given by admitting the existence of telepathic agents of a nature unknown to us, but certainly different from the personalities treated of in ordinary psychology. These agents, in consequence of a voluntary or involuntary excitation coming from the sensorial agent, transmit to a distance, by pro-

cesses unknown to themselves, the ideas they were charged to convey, or which, of their own initiative, they judge it opportune to convey. The "Elvira" which controls his sensitives he thinks on the whole we may call a personality, and says, "If I had not been previously in rapport with Elvira and asked her aid, it is probable that I should never have had an opportunity of observing a single telepathic dream." Mr. Myers fills nearly 200 pages with the experiences of W. Staunton Moses, "one of the most noteworthy lives of our generation," with whom thirty-eight principal spirits are claimed as communicating, including those of Beethoven, Swedenborg, President Garfield, Louis Napoleon, etc. Mr. Moses, who died in 1892 at the age of fifty-three, was an English clergyman, unmarried, of high character and intelligence, whose phenomena are presented in tabular form, and include movements of objects untouched, levitation, passage of matter through matter, intelligent raps, lights, objects materialized, etc. Mr. Myers cautiously concludes that it remains at bottom a mystery,—that we do not know the laws that govern the distribution of his strange and perplexing gift. "Yet, if indeed through such glimpses, such messages as came to my friend, our race is being obscurely guided into an avenue of eternal hope, it matters little whether we talk of chance or of merit."

Outside England occultism, in the smart new garb of modern science, is abundantly represented. In Germany, current numbers of *Sphinx* discuss the "Determination of Sex at Re-incorporation," magic and theosophy, astrology, speaking mediumship, extra-corporeal existence, the astral body, etc. In Italy the new *Revista* describes apparition at the time of death, translates and digests the English work, and in the opening number last January protests in a long editorial against "misoneism," especially that form of it based on a desire to avoid painful effort and the tedious re-adaptation of the mind to new conditions, which is charged against those who cannot accept the new teluric psychism. The Italian Psychic Society, founded at the end of 1894, had in April, 1895, eighty members. Its object is to have seances, lectures, discussions, and is open to all who recognize the truth of the so-called spirit phenomena, whatever the cause of them may be. Prof. Morenos of Venice argues for will as a force or entity distinct from the other forms of force and able to act against them. Fictitious sensations are proven to be transmitted. The *Revista* shows a tendency to refer to telepathic origin much, often ascribed to spirits, *i. e.*, the knowledge of an automatic writer really does come by telepathy from the things or events rather than from spirits. Spirit photography is regarded as not yet proven. In the *Psychical Review* a professor of physics expresses the belief that "we are very near to a discovery of a physical basis for immortality that will transform most all our thinking." Rev. M. J. Savage says: "Now I know that matter is sometimes moved without muscular contact," etc.; and again: "I have had communications while sitting in my study concerning things that were taking place 200 miles away. Over and over again such occurrences have taken place," etc. Rev. T. E. Allen, first secretary of the American Psychical Society, 1891, intimates that it desires to give a "thorough, candid and sympathetic sifting in this nineteenth century of ours" to "phenomena for which the great claim is made by many that they answer that wail of broken hearts, if a man die shall he live again?" The object of the society, as defined by its constitution, is to investigate "the phenomena of modern spiritualism in accordance with the scientific method." If spirit be a conscious entity dissociated from

matter, and immortality have no physical basis, then, an eminent American professor points out, "the earth would run away from the immortal part of man at the rate of about 25,000 miles per hour," so that spirit navigation would be an act of will instead of being possibly done by gravity without ghostly effort. Psychography, long distance clairvoyance, death prophesied in dreams, the divining rod, inspirational poetry, mysterious music revealed through clairaudience,—such are the themes of the *Psychical Review*, whose editor tells us that he deems himself peculiarly fitted to champion the spiritualistic hypotheses; believes himself, in fact, "inspired" to do it. This shows that although he urges the principle that "no state of consciousness is superior in authority to any other state," he still holds that some men are better for some things than some others—a principle which we venture to believe has much to be said in its favor, even were it a question of authority, for are we seriously told that if only "Messrs. Helmholtz, Huxley, Pasteur and Edison were simultaneously to announce themselves as converts to clairvoyance, thought-transference and ghosts, "there would be a prompt popular stampede that way?" There are proofs "entirely conclusive" for Dr. James that Mrs. Piper has shown in her trances a "knowledge of the personal affairs of living and dead people which it is impossible to suppose she can have gained in any other way. "Such things," he adds, "have broken down for my own mind the limits of the admitted order of nature. Science, so far as science denies such exceptional facts, lies prostrate in the dust for me; and the most urgent intellectual need which I feel at present is that science shall be built up again in a form in which such facts shall have a positive place." For Mr. Myers there is a reality in us far larger than we know, "an individuality which can never express itself completely through any corporeal manifestation." There is always some part of the self manifested, "some power of organic expression in abeyance or reserve."

Now let the reader turn from all this literature with its deep unconscious bias of prejudice, in the form of hunger for immortality, which weights every die of fact, where the atmosphere, though clearing up, is still murky with traces of nearly every form of superstition that the world has ever seen, to a book like Friedmann's on Illusion. The author, though a "nerve doctor" and a good clinician, is chiefly interested in normal psychology and philosophy and logic. His problem and method, which are all we here consider, are as follows: To collect with every possible detail and with as great accuracy as possible good typical cases of illusion, morbid and normal, including those of fabulists and phantastics, and then to study them from all points of view. The eccentric character and the tendency to regard or make them veridical, are parts of the illusion to be explained, and not data on which to base transcendental hypotheses. The structure of the self, the influence of feeling upon the evolution of the more complex illusions, their physical, psychic and hereditary root, are legitimate and right questions. Parrish's treatment, although he does consider briefly, but with negative conclusions, whether hallucinations are ever veridical, is also satisfactory.

If it be claimed that a folk-lorist gathering material from all over the world concerning amulets and charms, deems himself "called" to discuss whether they do really charm, or a student of spontaneous retinal imagery wants to ask if they are visions of things supernal, and claims "fair play" for these superstitions, or if a group of philanthropists wants to establish a mission or university settlement in the heart of ignorance and credulity to mitigate them—



we say merely that the energy could be better spent by better methods. It is curious that epistemologists who think that nothing is real but the thought of the individual at the moment, should feel impelled to "compensate" by holding that what used to be thought dreams, are really veracious of objective things. Is it a useful or a pernicious service to get fetishism, animism, etc., restated in current terms of science? When, if the nerve is severed that goes to my arm or leg, the two severed ends can never be put so near together that a volition to bend the limb can jump across the infinitesimal interval, is it likely that holophrastic impressions leap vast spaces? Again, is there no isolated conductivity among different fibres, or must we go back to the sixteenth century physiological sympathies? Science to-day, to quote a street song, has a great big swallow, but it can't quite swallow some things and continue to be science, and Clifford well said there were some theories a man could not verify without ceasing to be a man. The glory of the new psychology is not so much, as Mr. Myers thinks, that it is more exact, though that is of course true, but that its conclusions are more certain. So far from being less fit to open new fields and make fresh and great additions to the sum of human knowledge, than to make what was before known more precise, its chief claim is, the writer thinks, that it has first erected the ideal of collecting all the typical psychic experiences of man, his feelings, acts, ideals, normal and morbid, child and adult, criminal and law-abiding, and adding those of animals, and using all these as data, not to confirm any old longings or new theories, but for the most objective induction and painstaking study, fully persuaded, meanwhile, that the conclusions, whatever they may be and however long delayed, will be not only larger than all that can be sugared off out of spiritism, but that they will give us a vastly loftier and more adequate notion of all that can be called psychic.

G. S. H.

#### V.—MISCELLANEOUS.

*Mental Development in the Child and the Race.* PROF. JAMES MARK BALDWIN. Macmillan & Co., 1895.

Professor Baldwin has treated in this book a subject that is new and full of absorbing interest. As the title would indicate, he has tried to do for the development of the child and the race what Darwin undertook for the animal series in his "Origin of Species." He simply applies the principles of evolution to mental development, and shows that what holds good for organic life is true also for mental life. It is in no sense a book for the general public; in fact the style of the author is such that he will probably never become popular with the masses. The book has already been reviewed in the public press several times, and the character of it is pretty well known. The task that remains for the present reviewer is to call attention to the points where the author has succeeded and to point out some respects wherein he has failed. He has so frequently appeared in several prominent journals, discussing subjects relating to children, that when this book was announced, it was looked for with considerable interest, as it was believed that he would carry out in more detail and with greater thoroughness the work inaugurated by Darwin, Preyer, Perez and others in the study of their own children. In this respect the public will certainly be disappointed, for after the first three or four chapters very few observations and experiments made upon his own or other children are given, and the book is devoted almost entirely to theorizing